

UPBC Annual Report to the Faculty Senate for the Academic Year 2011-2012

What follows is a report from the University Planning and Budget Committee on their activities during the 2011-12 academic year. The report is divided into three sections, summary of activity, planning and budgeting.

Summary of Activity

The UPBC engaged in the following activities during 2011-12.

- Reviewed the President's report card for the University Strategic Plan. Attempted to identify the budgetary support levels for the most and least successful graded items.
- Worked with the Provost's office to understand and communicate the hiring strategy for tenure track faculty for FY12.
- Reviewed all campus-wide vacancies for the University.
- Reviewed the committee charter on multiple occasions ultimately removing one item relative to strategic planning initiatives.
- Received and shared information for the FY12 spending plan and multiple budget reductions. Various reduction scenarios occurred throughout the year including 2 rescissions, a biennial reduction, revenue loss and unanticipated facility repairs.
- Received two updates from the CAO with regard to major campus facilities and planning initiatives. On each occasion, provided the CAO with considerable feedback from the committee that was generated through the discussion of these initiatives.
- Reviewed reports from within the committee and from the athletics department relative to the spending on athletics at CCSU and the value of the activities within this department to the entire campus. A resolution was made to Senate for transparency regarding the open publication of reports already prepared by the department of athletics and the University.
- Multiple members of the committee served as indirect representatives for UPBC on two important campus committees; Master Planning and the CFO search.
- Reviewed 2012-13 budget proposals from the Division Heads and made recommendations to the President.
- Began to discuss and investigate issues related to the downturn in the University's retention rate and the impact on revenue
- Worked more closely with the Student Government Association (SGA) to fill the student appointees to the committee.
- Requested and shared data from the fiscal affairs office showing the impact of proposed minimum wage increases on the University part time employee workforce through FY14.
- Continued to update the campus community via the UPBC website with regard to the budget process at CCSU. UPBC formative feedback, Presidential responses, and the final approved divisional budget changes were included as part of this online data.

The committee spent many hours this past year debating the merits of developing a means for identifying if the University is spending at an increasing rate for athletics ahead of that for academics. After many meetings where this issue was discussed, multiple presentations to the committee, a continuation of the debate on this matter in Senate, a replay of the UPBC presentations to the full Senate, a request from Senate to have UPBC appear before that body to answer questions relative to motions not carried out of committee, the matter slowly reached an indecisive ending point during the spring semester. As indicated in the fall meeting of October 19, 2011, after listening to data presented to the committee the UPBC believed that

resolving that the athletics reporting should be more “transparent” was about as far as the group wanted to go with this item. In time, the term “transparent” was, in discussion, often replaced by the terms “more accessible”. Simply put, UPBC believed the University could be more upfront about providing public access to the data that was already being compiled and reported each year.

At the end of 2011-12, the UPBC sharpened its focus toward what the future committee may consider focusing on during the 2012-13 year, a review of the University Strategic Plan. Unlike the original project sponsored by the administration, the committee believes that it is time for a UPBC initiated mid-cycle review of this plan. More intermediate goals should be established, the “report card” model needs to be shored up regarding the data that is used, and the overall creation of some universal goals for the entire University are needed to provide better focus for the plan. One item in particular that dovetails into this update would be to consider further inclusion of the athletics department into the strategic plan thereby tying their budget requests more firmly into the overall goals of the University. The advent of the new Board of Regents also acts as an invite for this to be the proper time to commence such an update to our mainsail document for the University.

Planning

Use of University Facilities

The committee is concerned that the University could be utilizing its facilities base more effectively. This is not a direct finger being pointed at our facilities department. On the contrary, this needs to have University-wide support for changes that would impact on our ability to control costs and more effectively utilize our resources at CCSU. After discussions this year with the CAO the committee understands the difficulties these changes might produce. While often the discussion turns to the political pitfalls of being viewed as asking for buildings and then saying we are “closing” them, UPBC does not view this issue as being that black and white. There are numerous shades of gray. Campus scheduling, buildings operations and properly locating technology resources can all work together to allow for a more efficient use of campus spaces during “less than peak” hours. The UPBC is hampered by the fact that there remain two distinctly different bodies with the term “planning” in their title. The University Planning and Budget Committee and the Facilities Planning Committee. Many members of the committee have expressed concern this year that the administration, Senate and UPBC should work together to consider reconstituting the UPBC to serve as a single planning body for the University. A committee that openly represents faculty, staff, students and the administration on all matters.

Campus Scheduling

While it is not statistically evident at this time, UPBC strongly believes, after reviewing the adoption of block scheduling in the spring of 2011, that there is a correlation between some if not most of our revenue downturn in housing and food service and our student retention numbers. Other mitigating factors may include the unprecedented weather incidents of fall 2011 (tropical storm Irene and the October snow storm) and their impact on the cohesiveness of our freshman class and the continued sour economic climate. Regardless of the reasons why, the fact remains that CCSU cannot continue on this downward track of having less campus life from Friday to Sunday each week. CCSU will be competing in future years for a declining student population in a state where private and other for-profit educational institutions have stepped up their efforts to attract and retain students.

Campus life is not solely defined by Student Affairs responsibilities. The academic programming on Friday's should be increased to act as a hook for maintaining our resident population throughout the semester. UPBC has begun to receive feedback from the SGA that their group will be stepping up efforts to focus on why students are not maintaining more time and involvement on the campus. The issue of campus scheduling extends beyond just academic classroom endeavors. Student Affairs, with the full support of UPBC is investigating reacting as quickly as they can to requests for food service schedule changes to improve the opportunities for the students to dine on campus from Friday to Sunday. The UPBC has repeatedly discussed in committee this year that a model that might be successful is one that would migrate more of our Friday open time to mid-week. Many of the programs that utilize the large blocks of time on Fridays for specialized work (labs, practicum) have communicated to committee members that migrating their efforts to another large block of time during the week might be very possible given that they could be part of the positive solution to the problems of retaining our students both short term (on campus) and long term (as returning students).

While this occurred late in the year, the committee began to address how UPBC might play a role in reviewing, solely from a budget and planning standpoint, how improvements to both facilities usage and campus scheduling could have a positive impact on the University. UPBC believes that other groups (SGA, Senate and faculty committees) can review and argue for and against changes that impact on student's lives and faculty pedagogy.

Actions Related to Planning

The aforementioned resolution concerning athletics

"Concerning the reporting of financial data concerning CCSU's Athletic Program"

The UPBC believes that data related to our athletic program should be readily available to the campus and local community. Therefore the UPBC recommends the administration circulate an annual report for the athletic program. Since there is already an existing state auditor's report, the UPBC suggest the university circulate this report to the senate, UPBC and SGA, as well as publish it on the CCSU website.

Charter Amendment

The UPBC amended its own charter to reflect the removal in recent years of strategic planning initiative grants that once came forward through the committee.

Project Proposals

The UPBC received no project proposal documents submitted to the committee this year. As approved by Senate, any project that meets the following criteria is to be submitted for review:

- Any proposal that is estimated to cost over \$100,000.00 per year or in one-time expenses;
- Any proposal that moves more than two individuals from one administrative unit to another;
- Any proposal that requires hiring two or more full-time employees.

Report Card Budget Tracking

The UPBC created sub-committees for two high scoring and two low scoring items on the Strategic Planning Report Card distributed at the opening meeting in August 2011. After identifying the items that would be tracked, the committee attempted to gain insight into how budget decisions, positive or negative, impacted the resulting outcome that produced the grade. What the committee found was that many areas on campus were difficult to extract data from relative to this project and UPBC later abandoned the idea of pursuing it further.

Budgeting

Sans a permanent CFO, the committee worked very hard throughout the year with interim CFO and University Controller Kim Chagnon on many aspects of the budget process. This work continued with the arrival of our permanent CFO Charlene Casamento in the spring of 2012.

The committee was actively engaged in the budget decisions being made throughout the fall relative to the pending agreements between the state and employee unions. CCSU and the BOR had many alternative plans prepared for handling the various scenarios that might present themselves.

Post approval budget reconsiderations

UPBC recommended and approved a modified timeline for members of the executive committee to bring forth budgetary proposals as “mid-cycle” changes. Based on the informal budget calendar the committee uses, the February presentations to UPBC and later March approvals by President Miller have reached their 6 month timeframe by mid-late September. Of late, President Miller has maintained a strict policy that executive committee members must include budget changes in the “next budget cycle” to be considered for adoption in order that the committee has an opportunity to review these requests. While UPBC applauds the efforts by the President to keep the committee involved directly in the process, the members of the committee also do not want to be viewed as impeding the management of the University.

Recognizing that the University faces changes between the budget submittals in February to the roll out of the actual budget in late August, the committee agreed going forward to review any executive committee member's changes in September that they would like for the President to reconsider for the current fiscal year. By doing this, especially in the case of personnel, the management of the University will not be forced to possibly wait until the next budget cycle delaying their need for an entire year. Historically the items that are often requested for review are reallocations of existing spending, a moving of the dollars within the division, to cover a new or unexpected need that has arisen. The committee anticipates these requests to be minimal, but will have now provided a working solution for when they occur.

One-time Funds & Base Budget Funding

The University Planning and Budget Committee was very aggressive in its communication this year to constituents that the reliance on one-time funding needs to decrease. While the University maintains an anticipated vacancy level each year due to various circumstances that

then result in budgetary savings, as we hire and ramp up our payroll once again, the total savings has continued to reduce. This somewhat “socialist” strategy of redeploying funds often saved in large part to the open positions in Academic Affairs is not sustainable. For this reason, the committee also was a proponent this year of the migration of some important items from one-time funding support to various divisional base budgets. In the President’s response to the UPBC concerning the committee’s budget recommendations, he acknowledged the concerns and did, as best as he could right now with a sharp pencil, increase some base budget funding to institutionalize some items into a division’s budget line. These are true successes of the shared budget review process.

Actions related to budgeting

Annual Budget Proposal Review

Attached to this report is the full formative feedback document presented to the President and published on the UPBC website. Additionally, responses from the President to members of the committee can also be found on this site www.ccsu.edu/upbc under “Current Documents”.

Budget Communication and Transparency

The UPBC still believes that another layer of budget review needs to be considered for the future. Currently, divisional reductions, one-time/capital increases, and reallocations are considered. While base budget increases are also reviewed, they have not been plentiful in recent years. What the committee cannot look into is the existing budget allocations and how they are being used on an annual basis. When a division has for years had “XX” millions of dollars, and UPBC is only considering a few hundred thousand dollars in changes, there seems to be a disconnect to what committee members feel they can have input on related to the “big picture”.

The UPBC has published documents of what President Miller approved for the fiscal year 2013. Additionally members of Senate can find data with regard to tenure track hiring and the fiscal year 2012 approved spending plan.

Going forward, UPBC has responded to a request by Senate President Barrington to have Senate receive a full budget update by suggesting that the October timeframe would be well suited for such an update from both UPBC and the CFO. By late September each year, the current FY spending plan is approved, the financial books have been closed on the prior FY, and the previous spending plan is available for review against the closed books.